

Successful Meetings

Parliamentary Procedure

2007 Bar Leaders' Conference
September 27, 2007

Sigmund H. Abelson, DDS

Certified Parliamentarian, American Institute of
Parliamentarians.

Parliamentary Procedure

Definition

Parliamentary Law is the code of rules and ethics for working together in groups.

The courts hold that all deliberative groups must follow general parliamentary law whenever they are meeting to transact business.

Parliamentary Authority

- The book adopted by an organization as its authority on all procedural questions NOT covered by its bylaws or adopted rules
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*
- *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure—Alice Sturgis*
- *Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law and Procedure*
- *Riddick's Rules of Procedure*

Parliamentary Procedure

Basic Principles

- Order- must be orderly procedure
- Equality- all members are equal before the rule of laws
- Justice- “justice for all”
- Minority Rights- right of minority to be heard
- Will of the Majority Prevails

Parliamentary procedure

Precedence

- **Main Motion**

majority vote

Subsidiary Motions

- **Amend**
- **Refer**
- **Postpone to a certain time** **majority vote**
- **Limit debate**
- **Vote immediately**
- **Postpone Temporarily (table)**

majority vote

majority vote

2/3 vote

2/3 vote

majority vote

Privileged Motions

- **Question of Privilege**
- **Recess**
- **Adjourn**

No vote

majority vote

majority vote

Basic Rules Of Precedence

1. When a motion is being considered, any motion of higher precedence may be proposed, but no motion of lower precedence may be proposed.
2. Motions are considered and voted on in reverse order to their proposal. The motion last proposed is considered and disposed of first

Main Motion

- A main motion is a statement of proposed action for consideration and decision.
- It's purpose is to bring substantive proposals before the assembly for consideration and action
- After it is stated by the presiding office, the main motion becomes the subject for deliberation and decision

Steps in Presenting a Motion

1. A member addresses the presiding officer
2. The member is recognized by the presiding officer
3. The member proposes the motion
(Madam President, I move.....)
4. Another members seconds the motion
5. The presiding officer states the motion
6. The presiding officer asks if there is any debate on the motion.

Precedence Of Motions

Priority or Order In Which Motions Must be Proposed, considered and disposed of.

Privileged Motions

1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Question of Privilege

Subsidiary Motions

4. Postpone temporarily (table)
5. Close debate
6. Limit or extend debate
7. Postpone to a certain time
8. Refer to a committee
9. amend

Main Motion

10. Main motion

Amendments

Amendments revise the wording of a main motion to make it clearer, more complete to better reflect the majority of the assembly.

Primary Amendments (apply to main motion)

Secondary Amendments (apply to primary amendment)

Requires a majority vote—even if the main motion requires a 2/3 vote

Bylaws amendments require a 2/3 with prior notice

Motion to Refer

To transfer a motion that is pending before the assembly to a committee: for further study or investigation.

Majority vote required

Motion to Postpone to a Certain Time

To put off consideration of a pending main motion and to fix a definite time for its consideration

Majority Vote

Motion TO Limit Or Extend Debate

To limit or extend the time that will be devoted to discussion of a pending motion.

2/3 Vote Required (limits freedom of debate)

Motion to Close Debate

- To stop discussion on the pending question and to bring the pending question to an immediate vote
- 2/3 Vote Required-
- Then MUST take vote on pending motion

Motion to Postpone Temporarily (To Table)

- To temporarily set aside a pending main motion in such a way that, if the assembly wishes, the postponed motion can be taken up again for consideration at any time during the current meeting by a motion to *resume its consideration*.
- Majority vote required

RESTORATIVE MAIN MOTIONS

(Changing Previous Decisions)

- **Amend a previous action**
 - **Reconsider**
 - **Rescind**
 - **Ratify**
 - **Take from the table (Resume consideration)**
- (majority vote needed to pass)**

Parliamentary Procedure

Incidental Motions

Requests – no vote taken except to suspend rules

- **Point of order**
- **Parliamentary inquiry**
- **Withdraw a motion**
- **Appeal decision of chair**
- **Suspend rules (2/3 vote required)**
- **Division of question**
- **Division of assembly**

VOTING

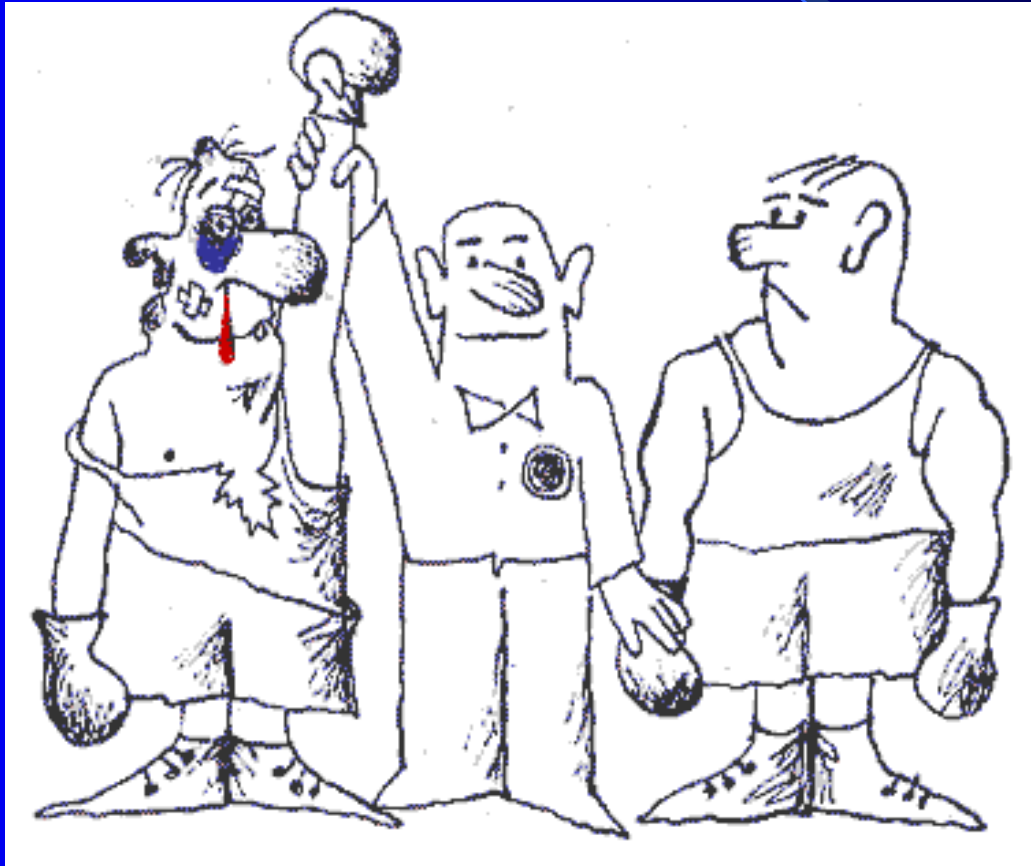
- **Majority vote**—more than half of the members voting.
- **If other than majority vote required, must be stated in the bylaws (plurality, 2/3 vote).**
- **Tie vote**—is a negative vote (not a majority).
- **Must qualify if majority of those voting, members, etc.**

Voting in Meetings

Methods of Voting

1. Voice Vote
2. Show of Hands
3. Standing Vote
4. Roll Call
5. Ballot
6. General Consent
7. Voting by Mail
8. Internet or Electronic Voting

Announce Results of Vote



Meetings

- Regular Meetings
- Special Meetings
- Annual Meeting
- Closed Session (executive session)

Regular Meetings

- **Bylaws fix times for holding meetings.**
- **May transact any business within the scope of the organization not requiring special notice.**

Special Meetings

- **Held to transact specific business only**
- **Must be called in accordance with the bylaws provisions governing special meetings**
- **Order of business consists of only proposals stated in the call for the meeting**

The Well Organized Meeting

- Starts and ends on time
- Provides for comfort of members
- Gets acquainted: names, phone nos., email, fax nos. of members provided
- Has an agenda which has been sent to the members ahead of time

The Well Organized Meeting

- Understands the mission, what is expected of the members
- Focuses on solutions
- Keeps discussion on track
- Keeps accurate records(minutes)
- Sets the time, date, and place for the next meeting

Meeting Killers

What Went Wrong?

- Long winded
- Off Agenda
- Side Conversations
- Too Much Time On One Issue
- Unprepared Attendees
- Not Enough Information Provided Before Meeting
- Late Arrivals OR Poor Attendance
- Rehashing Issues
- Waste of Time

The Successful Chairman

- Is well prepared
- Starts the meeting on time
- Defines the issues under discussion
- Directs discussion
- Does not permit distractions
- Keeps discussion on track
- Respects differing opinions

The Successful Chairman

- Participates in discussion fully
- Times the Meeting
- Has knowledge of parliamentary procedure
- Summarizes before members vote
- Has the right to vote
- Thanks the members

PRESIDING OFFICER'S DUTIES DURING DEBATE

- **Controls debate**
 - **Members speak only to the motion**
 - **Insist that every member be attentive to the speaker**
 - **Suppress disorder by eliminating whispering/preventing annoyance**
 - **Keep the subject clearly before the members**
 - **Rule out any irrelevant discussion**
 - **Summarize, before bringing issue to a vote**

Ensure All Understand The Issue Under Discussion



AGENDA

- **A list of the specific items under each division of the order of business that is to be presented at a meeting**
- **An agenda is flexible, and items may be added or omitted by a majority vote**

Using The Meeting Agenda Effectively

- Helps members prepare for the meeting
- Encourages Meeting Attendance
- Serves As A Management Tool For The Chair Once The Meeting Begins
 - Send the agenda along with the meeting notice
 - Send as much support material with the agenda as possible
 - Prioritize—action items first
 - Use consent agenda-do not waste time on reports that can be read-or approving routine items
 - Allow time for issues discussion

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Routine matters-non-controversial matters are approved with one vote.**
- **Any member has the right to remove any item from the consent agenda, in which case it is transferred to the regular agenda for consideration.**

Order of Business

- **A blueprint for meetings**
 - **Call to order**
 - **Approval of minutes**
 - **Reports of officers**
 - **Reports of Standing Committees**
 - **Reports of Special Committees**
 - **Unfinished Business**
 - **New business**
 - **Announcements**
 - **Adjournment**

Order of Business Special Meeting

- Call to order
- Business stated in the call to meeting
- Adjournment

QUORUM

- **The number of members of an organization that must be present at a meeting in order to transact businesses legally.**
- **In conventions—majority of the delegates registered.**
- **Usually set by the bylaws.**

How to Listen in Skillful Dialogue

- Stop Talking
- Imagine other person's viewpoint
- Look, act and be interested
- Don't interrupt
- Rephrase to ensure understanding
- Stop Talking

What Are The Ethical Implications Of Our Decisions?

- Are they consistent with our values?
- Will the real intent and motive stand the *sniff* test?
- Will it generally be considered fair?

Ex-Officio Member

- A member of a committee by virtue of some office he/she holds.
- Has all the rights and privileges of any committee member, including the right to speak and the right to vote.
- Counted in determining a quorum (except for president who is often made an ex officio member of all committees except nominating committee)

Parliamentary Organizations

- American Institute of Parliamentarians

www.parliamentaryprocedure.org

888-664-0428

- National Association of Parliamentarians

www.parliamentarians.org

888-NAP-2929